

Title: Ilshenar History

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Together, Minax and Mondain's most tremendous effort was to create the being, Exodus. Exodus was a bizarre fusion of daemon and machine, created to solidify Mondain's control of the world. Its being was woven inextricably in the fabric of time and Sosaria's physical material. When the Gem shattered, there should have been but one world in each shard: one facet, whose history until the shattering was entirely the same of the world that contained the Gem itself. Instead, Exodus was a bridge uniting time, the Gem, and the land of Sosaria.

The shattering left each shard at the beginning of one of many diverging futures, but Exodus gave each shard many diverging pasts as well: the facets.

In each facet, Exodus was projected to a different point in time, and that is the time when history begins to diverge from that of the true world that contains the Gem. For the facet of Ilshenar, that point in time is in the distant past, during the reign of the Juka and Meer.

Exodus continued there to attempt to fulfill its

purpose, which was to control the world. The Juka took Exodus as a leader and under his guidance began a new offensive against the Meer, more devastating than anything ever conducted in the original timeline. The Meer in turn escalated their attacks to the point that the existence of both races was threatened. To escape destruction, Exodus again traveled through time. The Meer put themselves in hibernation to follow.

Zog either was never born, or never had the chance to gain the Armageddon spell, and life continued.

Through the vast expanse of time the other facets stood barren, humans and gargoyles in Ilshenar multiplied yet remained primitive, until finally culture began to advance, still thousands of years ahead of the rise of the Esidin Empire on Felucca.

The primitive humans and gargoyles eventually evolved civilization as we know it and peacefully traded and shared their knowledge. They came to understand magic and the power of the virtues more deeply than any people known to our history. They built the shrines that still stand in Ilshenar and the facet gates that stand by these shrines. Learning from what cultures they found in other facets, they pieced together the nature of the facets and their world.

What they discovered disturbed them, because they realized that their entire history should never have come to pass. They named themselves the Followers of Armageddon, as of all the facets they visited, only theirs escaped the casting of the spell. Only they were descended from the people who, in every other facet, were destroyed.

The question that transfixated them was, since they found themselves in time before the event that created their world, could the shattering of the Gem still be in their future? What would be the consequences if it happened, or did not happen? They resolved to prevent the shattering, thus preventing their own history and uniting the shards; however, this proved impossible. The history of Ilshenar was so changed that Mondain never existed ("Mondain est an-ailem.") There was nothing they could try to prevent.

As the facets' histories passed the moment of the shattering in unison, great cataclysms assailed them all. The lands were all changed, and not one facet was left untouched. The facets most divergent from original history, however, were changed the most. Ilshenar was among these, and at once its people found themselves in a new world, having the geography as we see it today.

Survival was the immediate concern, rather than contemplation of what had come to pass. The gargoyles sequestered themselves in a new home underground, and the humans built the city of Montor in the Northeast of the new world. At this time lived a woman, Ilshen, who rallied the peoples' will to survive in that difficult time, and this fact is honored in the present name of the facet. The unity of the humans in Montor was not to last, as the place was destroyed in a volcanic eruption. From the refugees of Montor several bands each settled in various places, now called Terort Skitas, Mistas, and Mirtas.

Another group made a home in halls delved into the mountains near the Shrine of Honesty. These scholars were called the Zog Cabal, but have also been called the Followers of Armageddon, since the other inhabitants of Ilshenar have long ceased to think of themselves as such. They were scholars and turned their study away from the facets to the many planes of existence beyond Sosaria. These planes, they found, were not copied within the Gem, but were outside the Gem and in contact with all of them.

One of these planes was the source of the wisps, and the scholars learned many things from them. The wisps offered any knowledge, quid pro quo for answers to the many questions of the wisps' own. One important thing the scholars learned was

that Xorinia was not the sole inhabitant of its dimension. There were others, and one of these was the dark wisps. The scholars questioned the dark wisps for answers their lighter brethren could not answer, but what they learned and what they did with that knowledge are difficult to determine. It is clear though that it lead to the downfall of human civilization in Ilshenar.

A timeline cannot be constructed, but it seems that the dark wisps revealed a new interpretation of the significance of Mondain's non-existence in Ilshenar. Whereas to the scholars of Terort Skitas, Mondain's failure to appear was the undoing of their plans, the Zog Cabal believed that Mondain's non-existence was necessary for maintaining some inscrutable "balance."

Based on this, the scholars accepted the dark wisps' urging to summon... something. There is no surviving record of what they summoned, nor a better explanation of why. In the records available from Terort Skitas, this being is called only "bal-lem," meaning "evil one."

Apparently, the other humans achieved a limited victory and imprisoned this being. Four leaders of the Zog Cabal, whose names were Martoo Saul, Junin Pince, Zendella Kxriss, and Miron Vehl, were banished to another

facet as punishment for their involvement.

However, for some unknown reason, the people of Terort Skitas and Mistas felt that there was still great evil at work in Ilshenar. They evacuated their people and sealed the facet gates, to protect the other facets from whatever evil lingered in Ilshenar.

After the evacuation, growing numbers of monsters encroached ever further on the few remaining civilized inhabitants, until after many years Gilforn the mage of Britannia opened the facet gates again.

The Britannians tentatively explored Ilshenar and began piecing together the facts of what had recently transpired there. Yet, the situation became complicated by ghosts of Ilshenar's most distant past. Exodus and the Juka had ended their time travel to arrive in our present, and with them the Meer emerged from their hibernation to renew their war. The affairs of Ilshenar and Britannia are by this time fully intertwined, and so our tale will rejoin the war of the Juka and Meer after the histories of our own facets have been told.